



CABINET - 15 SEPTEMBER 2023

**COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND ACCESS POLICY
FOR THE RECORD OFFICE FOR LEICESTERSHIRE,
LEICESTER AND RUTLAND**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the revised Collections Development Policy and Access Policy, for the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR).
2. These policies are a requirement of archive accreditation and will support the Record Office's accreditation submission to The National Archives in November 2023.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that:
 - a) The Collections Development Policy for the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland be approved;
 - b) The Access Policy for the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland be approved.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. The current Collections and Access policies have expired and are due for renewal. The policies must address the key requirements set out in the Accreditation standard, administered by The National Archives. These two policies are key elements of Archive Service Accreditation and are used by the ROLLR to guide its activity and ensure consistency, transparency, effective use of resources and adherence with archive sector ethics.
5. The Collections Development Policy, attached as Appendix A, sets out the vision and purpose for the ROLLR collections remit, including loans, transfers, donations, purchases, and bequests.
6. The Access Policy, attached as Appendix B, sets out the ROLLR's commitments to create a culture where people of all backgrounds and experiences feel appreciated and valued, providing access for everyone.

7. These policies support the Adults and Communities Department's ambition to "*Save and make accessible the cultural and historic heritage of the County,*" which is also a key commitment in the Adults and Communities Strategy "Delivering Wellbeing and Opportunity 2020–2024".

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

8. The revised and approved policies are required for the ROLLR's accreditation submission to The National Archives in November 2023.
9. Partners have been consulted on the revised policies.
10. The Adult and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the policies at its meeting on 4 September and its comments will be reported to the Cabinet.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

11. The policies support the County Council's Strategic Plan 2018–2022, in particular the 'Great Communities' outcome, by helping ensure "*cultural and historical heritage and the natural environment are enjoyed and conserved*".
12. The statutory basis of the archive service rests on the Local Government Act 1972 sections 224-229. Section 224 instructs principal authorities (the definition of which includes the County Council) to make 'proper arrangements' for the safekeeping of their records and records in their custody. This includes making arrangements for inspection and copying of various specified documents. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 places obligations on the County Council to maintain its records in line with the provisions of a Code of Practice on records management issued by the Secretary of State which states that archives of public authorities should only be transferred to an accredited archive service or to a storage provider compliant with relevant British Standards and able to provide the necessary access.
13. Archive Service Accreditation is the UK Standard for Archive Services. The scheme is administered by The National Archive.

Resource Implications

14. There are no new resource implications associated with these policies. However, they set the standards by which the ROLLR will operate and care for the collections it holds in trust for the people of Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland. Achieving these standards will require an ongoing resource commitment from all three partners.
15. The most significant implication of maintaining these standards is the need for the ROLLR to resolve its current lack for storage space. This is being addressed through work on the Archives, Collections and Learning (ACL) Hub, a report on which was considered by the Cabinet on 12 June 2018.
16. A Programme Board, chaired by the Assistant Director (Strategic Commissioning), is in place and has commissioned the development of a Royal Institute of British Architects stage 2 design. This work will provide a costed design proposal for the delivery of an ACL Hub on the County Hall campus. The outcome of this work will

be reported to the Cabinet, in order to determine whether this scheme should be progressed.

17. There is no capital allocation in the current Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-2027, although the scheme is reflected in the future development programme.
18. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

19. None.

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PART B

Background

20. The County Council manages the ROLLR on behalf of a partnership with Leicester City Council and Rutland Council. These arrangements are based upon a legal agreement with each partner and ensure each authority is able to dispense its statutory responsibilities with regard to the provision on an archive service. Each partner makes a proportionate financial contribution towards the annual operating costs of the ROLLR.
21. The ROLLR is delivered from the Record Office, Long Street, Wigston.
22. The Accreditation standard defines good practice and identifies agreed standards, encouraging and supporting development and is made up of three sections:
 - Organisational health;
 - Collections;
 - Stakeholders and their experiences.
23. Each section is broken down into requirement grouped as follows:
 - *Policies* – describing the overall intentions and direction of an organisation;
 - *Plans* - forward looking documents that set out the objectives of the organisation and identify the actions needed to achieve them in line with the organisations policies and to deliver its mission;
 - *Procedures* – which describe a specified way to carry out an activity or process.
24. The ROLLR's last accreditation standard award was received in February 2018 and The National Archive have advised that the resubmission for accreditation is required by November 2023.

Collections Development Policy

25. The Collections Development Policy, attached as Appendix A, approved by the County Council as the governing body, is a requirement of accreditation. The policy must cover the acquisition, passive and proactive accruals, appraisal and deaccessioning of material (taking material out of the collection), as well as analogue and digital materials where these are held. The amendments to the Collections Development Policy, are minimal and primarily relate to consistent terminology.
26. Below is a brief summary of the key elements of policy:
 - a) *Introduction* - This contains the ROLLR's mission statement ("*We aim to collect and preserve the written, printed, recorded and digital heritage of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland and encourage as many people as possible to access, use and contribute to this rich and diverse archive in many different ways.*") and a brief description of the service provided.
 - b) *Scope* - This outlines the different types and format of collection that are within the ROLLR remit.

- c) *Purpose* - This explains the full collecting remit of the ROLLR, including loans, transfers, donations, purchases, and bequests.
- d) *Definition of Terms* - This explains what is meant by the key terms of loans, donations, purchases, bequests, transfers, and targeted and commissioned collecting.
- e) *Responsibilities* - This explains the governance and review processes used by the ROLLR, including the role of the Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet.
- f) *Policy statements* - A series of statements which sets out how, why and where the ROLLR will collect. The overarching intention is *“The Record Office collects (on loan or by donation, purchase or bequest), maintains and makes available to all any significant recorded material relating to the life and history of the diverse communities of the counties of Leicestershire and Rutland and the City of Leicester.”*
- g) *Related Policies, Legislation and Guidance* - This refers to any related policies, including the ROLLR Access Policy.
- h) *Review of policy* - This records dates of previous policy reviews and sets future review dates. This policy is due to be reviewed no later than 2028.

Access Policy

- 27. The proposed Access Policy 2023-28, attached as Appendix B, must be approved by the County Council, as the governing body and is a requirement of accreditation. The policy sets out the service’s approach to access and ensures that the service works in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This policy has a new clearer format, similar to the Museum Service Access Policy approved by the Cabinet in November 2021.
- 28. The Access Policy must specify the ways in which access is provided and enhanced for all users and stakeholders, appropriate to the organisation’s mission statement and the nature and scale of its collection.
- 29. The policy also sets out the ROLLR’s commitment to providing a culture where people of all backgrounds and experiences feel appreciated and valued and access will be provided for everyone.
- 30. Below is a brief summary of the key elements of policy:
 - a) *Introduction* - This contains the ROLLR’s mission statement (*“We aim to collect and preserve the written, printed, recorded and digital heritage of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland and encourage as many people as possible to access, use and contribute to this rich and diverse archive in many different ways.”*) and states the intention of the Access Policy which is to “engage openly, positively and equally with communities and our commitment to achieve equality of opportunity by working to remove or minimise barriers that prevent people engaging with our archive service, buildings, collections, website, social media

channels, learning programmes, events, volunteer opportunities and engaging with our staff.”

- b) *Scope* - This outlines that the policy extends across respective buildings and collection facilities, website and other online activities, and other venues where outreach and engagement programmes will be delivered. It also covers access for users. It does not cover access in relation to staff, volunteers, freelancers, or contractors, which are addressed elsewhere within corporate policies and procedures.
- c) *Purpose* - This states the County Council’s commitment to increasing access to services and resources by identifying ways to provide an accessible, engaging, innovative, sustainable, relevant, and responsive service of the highest quality.
- d) *Definition of Terms* - This recognises seven principal barriers to access these being:
- Attitudinal
 - Cultural
 - Geographic
 - Technological
 - Intellectual
 - Economic
 - Physical/sensory
- e) *Responsibilities*: This explains the governance and review processes used by the ROLLR, including specific reference to the role of this Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet, how audiences are consulted and engaged with and responsibilities in respect of the Corporate Equalities Policy and Action Plan.
- f) *Policy statements* – This section gives detail on how barriers to access are overcome or mitigated by the ROLLR, with reference to each of the seven principal barriers to access outline above. The overarching intention is “*The Record Office makes available to all the written and digital heritage of the counties of Leicestershire and Rutland and the City of Leicester. Access exists within the framework of resources, legislative requirements, and preservation needs. The Record Office aims to facilitate and extend access by understanding user needs and ensuring that the resources can be accessed in a variety of ways.*”
- g) *Related Policies, Legislation and Guidance* - This highlights key policies and legislation that inform and guide the Access Policy. This includes national legislation such as the Equality Act 2010 and local plans and guidance.
- h) *Policy Review* - This records previous reviews and sets future review dates. This policy is due to be reviewed no later than 2028.

Partnership Working and Associated Issues

31. The ROLLR is delivered in partnership with Leicester City and Rutland Councils and there are individual Service Level Agreements with Leicestershire County Council. Each partner retains ownership of the archive material related to their geographic area of responsibility. Partners have been consulted on the revised policies and have not requested any changes.

Risk Assessment

32. The Collections and Access policies are key elements of the Archive Service Accreditation submission. Failure to secure accreditation would result in the ROLLR's status as an approved place of deposit being removed. In this circumstance compliant provision would need to be made to avoid the County Council, and partners, being in breach of their statutory responsibilities with regard to the Local Government Act 1972 and the Code of Practice issued under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Consultation

33. Officers from Leicester City Council and Rutland Council were consulted as part of the review process and are in support of the revised policies.

Comments of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

34. The Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the revised policies on 4 September and its comments will be reported to the Cabinet.

Conclusions

35. The two policies have been revised in line with relevant guidance from The National Archives and in consultation with partners. If adopted these policies will guide the ROLLR over the next five years, or until they are next reviewed.

Background papers

Archive Service Accreditation - <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/archive-service-accreditation/>

Delivering Wellbeing and Opportunity in Leicestershire – Adults and Communities Department Ambitions and Strategy for 2020-24 <https://bit.ly/3swoTal>

Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan 2018-22 <https://bit.ly/3Pe6nh5>

Report to the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 4 September 2023 – Collections Development Policy and Access Policy for the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland - <https://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/g7109/Agenda%20frontsheet%20Monday%2004-Sep-2023%2014.00%20Adults%20and%20Communities%20Overview%20and%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=0> (item 10)

Report to the Cabinet: 19 November 2021 – Updated Policies for Leicestershire County Council's Museum Service - <https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MIId=6448> (Item 78)

Report to the Cabinet: 18 June 2018 – Archives, Heritage and Learning Collections Hub <https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MIId=5181> (Item 159)

Code of Practice on the management of records issues under section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 -

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1010395/Freedom_Information_Code_Practice_Web_Accessible.pdf

Equality Implications

36. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and concluded the impact was neutral. The policies do not represent any change to current functions or services.
37. Ensuring the Access Policy is regularly reviewed helps ensure continued deployment of the County Council's responsibilities in relation to the Equalities Act 2010 and seeks to ensure services are accessible to everyone.

Human Rights Implications

38. There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Appendices

Appendix A: Collections Development Policy, 2023-2028

Appendix B: Access Policy, 2023–2028